

December 07, 1999 - Minutes

Department of Technology Planning

Virginia Geographic Information Network

Virginia Geographic Information Network Advisory Board

Department of Information Technology

Executive Conference Room, 3rd floor of the Richmond Building

110 S. 7th Street, Richmond, Virginia

Members Present:	Honorable John Watkins, <i>Chairman</i>
	Daniel S. Shaffer, <i>Vice Chairman</i>
	Ken Anderson
	Kenneth D. Barker
	Michael D. Clower
	W. Page Cockrell
	Pete Kolakowski
	Jerry Simonoff
Designee:	Jean Tingler for Mark R. Kilduff
Members Absent:	The Honorable W. Tayloe Murphy, Jr.
	The Honorable Watkins M. Abbitt, Jr.
	The Honorable R. Edward Houck
	William C. Cleveland
	Dr. W. Mark Crain
	Mark R. Kilduff
VGIN Staff:	William D. Shinar, VGIN Division Coordinator
	Bob Rike, VGIN Division Assistant Coordinator
	John Mcgee, VGIN Division Assistant Coordinator

The Virginia Geographic Information Network (VGIN) Advisory Board meeting was called to order at 3:10 P.M. by the Honorable John Watkins, Chairman.

The draft minutes of the October 28, 1999 VGIN Advisory Board meeting were approved as presented.

VGIN Coordinator's Report

Bill Shinar reviewed VGIN's activities since the last Advisory Board meeting on October 28, 1999. He indicated that VGIN continues to provide input as necessary to the Budget Analysts on two (2) decision packages.

Mr. Shinar informed the board that a toll free telephone number for VGIN has been established and is in service. Bob Rike explained that he is contacting each of the local governments to let them know the toll free number is available.

Workgroups

Mr. Shinar provided an update on the status of the various workgroups since the last Board Meeting.

The **Geodesy Work Group** met on November 16. They established a presentation format for the geodesy white paper and completed another draft of the section on geodetic control. John McGee indicated that this draft section was almost ready for review by the standards committee.

The **Metadata Work Group** completed work on a draft minimum metadata summary. VGIN has met with a number of state agencies to review the summary metadata and is following up on comments and conclusions. Bill indicated that additional discussion of the metadata summary report was scheduled later in the meeting.

VGIN is preparing research materials for the **Local Government Work Group**.

The distributed spatial data Library work group has been formed and will hold it's first meeting tomorrow, December 8 at 2:00pm. Participants in the workgroup include:

Lowell Ballard, VEDP

Dan Widner, VDOT

James Wilson, James Madison University (JMU)

Micheal Furlough, University of Virginia (UVA)

Karl Huber, DCR

Jefferson Waldon, Virginia Tech (VPI)

Matt Blaes, VGIN

Bill Shinar, VGIN

Presentations

Mr. Shinar gave a presentation to the Richmond Regional chapter of the Virginia Association of Land Surveyors. He noted that the Assistant Secretary of Technology was scheduled to speak at the Virginia surveyors' annual conference in January.

Meetings

VGIN has met with several state agencies including the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), the Department of Information Technology (DIT), Historic Resources, Game and Inland Fisheries and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

Meetings with local governments included the Richmond Regional, Hampton Roads and Northern Neck GIS users groups and a meeting of the Northern Virginia GIS Managers.

Mr. Rike attended a meeting of the Virginia Utilities Coordination Committee (VUCC). He explained that the VUCC was a multi-utility committee whose mission is to improve communication, cooperation and coordination among utilities and others with whom they interact across the state. Mr. Rike reported that the group has invited VGIN to give a presentation at their annual meeting, which is scheduled for April 12th and 13th.

Mr. Shinar attended the COTS State and Local Applications and Integration Sub Committee (SLANI) meeting. Mr. Shinar also met with the North Carolina Center for Geographic Information and Analysis (CGIA). The CGIA was interested in a joint effort to map in-flowing water basin hydrology at a scale of 1:24,000. Ms. Tingle indicated that this mapping had already been completed. A discussion on the availability of this data set followed. Mr. Shaffer thought the data had been compiled but that it may be a proprietary data set.

On-going Support and Research

VGIN continues to provide support for the Y2K effort, The Land Records Task Force and the Secretary of Technology. Mr. Shinar noted that Statewide IT hardware and software procurement responsibilities have been consolidated under the Secretary of Technology.

Implementation and Technology Development

Mr. Shinar indicated that GIS based tracking capabilities have been developed to support the Y2K reporting effort and that base mapping data has been compiled for the Secretary of Technology's GIS.

Draft formats for the “GIS Resources” section on the VGIN web site for local governments, State agencies and Universities have been developed by Mr. Rike and Mr. McGee respectively. The goal in developing the contact formats was to provide useful information that would encourage communication with minimal impact on the participants. Mr. Rike and Mr. McGee presented the draft formats to the board and reviewed the content.

Ms. Tingler asked if there was a location on the form for state agencies to list their data layers. Mr. Shinar indicated that this form could be thought of as the contact portion of a data clearinghouse and that data elements were intended to be listed as part of a metadata summary, which would be discussed next.

Mr. Shinar discussed VGIN’s mandated data reporting for state agencies. He indicated that the minimum metadata summary developed by the Metadata Work Group, and reviewed with state agencies, could be used to accomplish this mandate. The summary metadata would provide a consistent reporting format for the spatial data clearinghouse and would begin as an Intranet based application. Once the system is running efficiently and any issues of security have been worked out, then the goal would be to make the metadata available to the public.

Mr. McGee presented a sample of the minimum metadata summary included in the board's package. The metadata summary included 54 data elements from the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) metadata standard that the workgroup felt were necessary at a minimum. He noted that this represents a fraction of the data potentially required for full FGDC metadata. The VGIN minimum metadata summary parallels the structure of the FGDC standard. Data can be automatically extracted from FGDC compliant metadata so that organizations do not have to duplicate efforts.

Mr. McGee reviewed an example of a user-friendly worksheet, to assist users in developing the minimum metadata summary elements.

Mr. Shinar discussed the ongoing technology research for the Distributed Spatial Data Library. He indicated that Matt Blaes accompanied Lowell Ballard and Jean Tingler of the VEDP on a visit to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to see a working spatial data library application. Mr. Blaes reported that the Maine implementation utilized Citrix META Frame and Microsoft terminal server to provide remote access to GIS data and applications run from a central data warehouse.

Ms. Tingler indicated that the VEDP was working with Citrix and Microsoft Terminal Server applications as well as ArcInfo 8x and SDE now and that she could/would try to set up the application over the next 3 months or so for testing. Ms. Tingler indicated that she is getting ready to do a pilot project and suggested that other agencies could VEDP in this..

Ms. Tingler indicated that she was impressed with the telecommunications and response of the Maine application even at the minimum connection using a 28.8 kb/sec modem for remote connections. She was encouraged although it was a single department centralized solution. She indicated that Maine had spent 10 million so far and has had two other failed attempts. They have conducted a lot of research and have good data available that we can learn from.

There was discussion of connectivity and the currently available bandwidth as an obstacle for a distributed solution. Mr. Blaes said that Maine's DEP found that inter-departmental cooperation was also an obstacle that they encountered.

Senator Watkins asked if anyone was working with the State Corporation Commission (SCC) to help them develop GIS based applications to help them meet the challenges they face with deregulation of the utilities industries. Mr. Shinar indicated that VGIN had met with the SCC several times and would continue to work with them.

Issues:

Ikonos Cost Discussion

Mr. McGee presented additional information on Space Image's Ikonos product based on questions and discussion from the last board meeting. He explained that the advertised price for the most accurate product, which appears to be comparable to the price for a conventional aerial photography, does not include ground control and a DEM that would be required to produce the product. He indicated that it has been difficult to get information to address some of the questions raised at the last meeting because the product is very new and that he would continue to look into it.

Ms. Tingler indicated that she has purchased CARTARA data from Space Imaging and that VEDP has image processing software to perform image rectification in house. She said that the 1: 24,000 data that she has purchased is of good quality and received quickly. She said that it has been useful for VEDP when they need to know what was on the ground on a given date.

Surveyor's Legislative Agenda

Mr. Shinar reviewed a situation that has developed related to a legislative initiative by the Virginia Association of Surveyor's to adopt a "Model Law" developed by the National Council of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors (NCEES). Mr. Shinar presented a brief background on the "Model Law". He indicated that he was concerned that language in the "Model Law" effectively expanded the definition of the practice of surveying to include photogrammetry, map production and GIS.

Mr. Shinar reported that he had contacted the State GIS Coordinators for North Carolina and South Carolina where versions of the model law have been adopted. The State Coordinators indicated that the legislation was adopted without review or comment from the GIS departments or the GIS community in their states. They indicated that they anticipate significant impacts on GIS and the development and use of GIS products as a result of the legislation.

Mr. Shinar indicated that he had reviewed the section of the state code that enables the regulation of professions and occupations and it indicates that regulation is only to be undertaken to preserve the health, safety and welfare of the public.

Mr. Cockrell indicated that the model law was drafted to address issues of liability faced by the surveyors. Mr. Shinar indicated that he would prefer to see the Virginia

Association of Surveyors identify specific dangers to the health, safety and welfare of the public and seek specific solutions rather a blanket regulatory expansion to address a potential issue. However, Mr. Shinar also expressed concern that every effort be made to work with the surveyor's to understand and help find solutions to their issues.

Mr. Cockrell said that the Virginia surveyors association was reacting to the proposed legislation as well. He indicated that they are trying to review the draft and develop comment for the regulatory board to consider before it makes a recommendation.

Mr. Shaffer said that surveyors do not perform the display and publishing tasks involved in the development of most GIS products and services.

Senator Watkins indicated that the legislation was problematic in that it attempts to regulate a "practice" and is not just a "title" or "certification" law. He also indicated that it might raise greater issues of liability if surveyors are required to certify all GIS and mapping products.

Mr. Simonoff indicated that if data integrity and reliability are the issues, it is reasonable to ask data producers to address this issue. Mr. Shaffer agreed and indicated that this should be addressed with metadata.

Mr. Cockrell indicated that the National Council for Examination of Engineers and Surveyors (NCEES) developed the "Model law" to address issues related to NAFTA.

Senator Watkins asked Mr. Cockrell if the Virginia Association of Surveyors intended to introduce legislation on the issue in this session. Mr. Cockrell indicated that the licensing board would introduce any legislation.

Ms. Tingler indicated that she was not sure that certification was such a bad idea. She indicated that some oversight of GIS professionals was not necessarily bad.

Mr. Simonoff noted that people make decisions every day with the best data available to them. He indicated that we usually tend to gravitate toward more detail. If the "Model Law" were adopted by the State it would send the message that there is only one acceptable level of data accuracy. This could stop current GIS efforts and make future efforts so cost prohibitive that there would be no activity to regulate.

Mr. Cockrell indicated that regulatory licensing could provide the state some quality control over GIS providers.

Senator Watkins indicated that the term practice is ill defined and that he felt surveyors might be able to achieve protection from liability with disclaimers available under the existing regulations.

Mr. Cockrell indicated the surveyor community is as concerned, as anyone that legislation would be adopted without their input. Ken Anderson said that he was not a fan

of regulation. He indicated that he was asked to sit in on a meeting to consider the draft legislation.

Mr. Clower questioned the number of existing surveyors capable of performing GIS related work. Mr. Shaffer indicated that he thought only the larger multi-disciplinary firms could probably do the work. He said that one result of the legislation would be an increase in the cost of GIS products and services. Mike Clower agreed and indicated that the lack of available resources would effectively hamper or kill GIS activity in the State.

Subcommittees/Membership

Restructuring of the subcommittees was discussed. It was agreed that the subcommittees needed to be structured so that a quorum could be met and that meetings could be announced at least three (3) days in advance and posted publicly. Video conferencing and some of the legal issues involved with a public meeting videoconference were discussed.

Mr. Anderson indicated that he would like to see some continuity on some of the issues of the standards and operations committee.

Senator Watkins suggested that the board consider the issue and discuss how the subcommittees can be reconstituted in a more manageable form at the next board meeting.

Committee Reports:

Planning Committee. No report.

Standards and Policy Committee. No report.

New Business:

Mr. Anderson discussed the new North Carolina Standards for Photogrammetry and Ortho Photography that he forwarded for review. He indicated that the standard sets a minimum statewide standard for ortho photography and a discussion of the standard followed. Mr. Anderson indicated that he hoped current VGIN budget initiatives addressed similar standards. Senator Watkins explained that the VGIN initiatives were developed through discussion with the Advisory Board but that the specific content of initiatives was not available to the board.

Mr. Shaffer said that statewide photogrammetric standards should address local needs.

Senator Watkins noted that the deceminal redistricting effort that is coming up could be a great opportunity to demonstrate and gain visibility for a GIS application at the state and local levels. He indicated that he hoped census data would be available and useful at each level of government.

Mr. Shaffer indicated that he was no longer with ISSI and distributed his new contact information.

Board Meeting Schedule:

The next meeting of the Advisory Board is scheduled for Wednesday February 2 at 3:00 p.m. in the Richmond Plaza Building (DTP/DIT) Richmond, VA.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

William D. Shinar

VGIN Division Coordinator

Log of Attendees

Murali Rao	VDOT
Dan Widner	VDOT
David Kensey	DEQ
Daniel Knopp	Virginia Power